



STATE OF WASHINGTON

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Human Rights Commission Speaks Out on Cross Burning Incident

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Olympia, Washington

It has come to the attention of the Washington State Human Rights Commission that Pastor Jason Martin of Arlington, Washington and his family were the victims of a cross burning incident during the night of March 24, 2004. The Commissioners and staff of the Commission were deeply troubled to learn of this incident. It is a shocking reminder that racism and hate crimes unfortunately still exist in the Pacific Northwest.

For the Commission, which has been charged with the task of preventing and eliminating discrimination in the state of Washington since 1949, this incident is a disturbing and painful reminder that there is still much work to be done in the field of human and civil rights.

The Commission extends its support to the Martin family during this difficult time. We will continue to monitor the investigation of this incident through contact with local law enforcement and community-based chapters of civil rights organizations.

The Commissioners of the Washington State Human Rights Commission are Charlotte Coker, Commission Chair, Spokane; Ellis Casson, Seattle, Dallas Barnes, Pasco; J. Reiko Callner, Olympia; and Ben Cabildo, Spokane. The Executive Director of the Commission is Marc Brenman.

Reverend Ellis Casson, Human Rights Commissioner from Seattle stated, "This is an unfortunate situation. It's good that the youngsters came forth and that Pastor Martin is willing to meet with them and forgive them."

The Commission offers free training and technical assistance on the Washington State Law Against Discrimination. For further information contact us at 1-800-233-3247 or visit our website at <http://www.hum.wa.gov>.

For further information regarding this statement, contact Marc Brenman at (360) 753-2558 or mbrenman@hum.wa.gov.

